

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AF-10 ARA-10 EA-10 EUR-12 NEA-10
AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03 INR-10
NSAE-00 SP-02 STR-07 TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01
AGRE-00 L-03 OIC-02 /114 W

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD ECE

SUBJECT: ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (ECE)

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURAL PROBLEMS,
TWENTY-NINTH SESSION, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND,
MARCH 6-10, 1978

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THE COMMITTEE CONCLUDED ON SCHEDULE.
IN ADDITION TO CARRYING OUT A DISCUSSION ON THE MARKET
SITUATION ON SELECTED COMMODITIES, THE COMMITTEE REVIEWED
RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN AGRICULTURAL TRADE; REVIEWED AND
PASSED ON THE ACTIVITIES BEING CARRIED OUT AND PLANNED
BY ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES; AND APPROVED A MODIFIED PROGRAM
OF WORK FOR 1978-1982. END SUMMARY.

2. TWENTY-SEVEN MEMBER COUNTRIES AND FIVE INTERNATIONAL
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
PARTICIPATED IN THE SESSION. THE COMMITTEE REELECTED
FOR A SECOND TERM MR. J. HAMMER OF HUNGARY AS CHAIRMAN
AND MR. P. HALIMI OF FRANCE AS VICE CHAIRMAN.

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3. THE USSR MADE ITS USUAL PROPOSAL REGARDING THE HOLDING
OF A HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT,
CITING SPECIFICALLY THE RELATIONSHIP OF ACTIVITIES OF
THE COMMITTEE TO PROBLEMS OF POLLUTION OF WATER BY
PESTICIDES AND OTHER CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES, PROBLEMS OF
LAND USE, AND RELATED QUESTIONS. IN CONTRAST TO THE
TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION WHEN SEVERAL EASTERN EUROPEAN

COUNTRIES TALKED IN FAVOR OF THE PROPOSAL, ONLY THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC SUPPORTED THE PROPOSAL AT THIS SESSION. DENMARK, SPEAKING FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THERE WAS NO GROUND FOR DISCUSSING THE QUESTION IN THE COMMITTEE, THAT RESOLUTION 1 (XXX11) PROVIDED ADEQUATE PROCEDURE IN THIS RESPECT. THE VIEW WAS SUPPORTED BY THE U.S. DELEGATION.

4. THERE WAS MORE DISCUSSION THAN BEFORE, AT LEAST IN RECENT YEARS, ON THE REAL ROLE OF THE ECE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURAL PROBLEMS. PROBING QUESTIONS WERE ASKED BY THE CANADIAN DELEGATION (SHEFRIN) ON THE VALUE OF THE COMMODITY STUDIES, AND THE FACT THAT THERE WAS NO REAL DISCUSSION OF AGRICULTURAL POLICIES. MOST IF NOT ALL OTHER DELEGATIONS WERE NOT PREPARED TO DISCUSS THIS POINT IN DETAIL.

5. THE REPORT ON THE DAIRY MARKET SITUATION 1976 AND 1977, OF THE THREE COMMODITY REPORTS, CAME IN FOR THE MOST DISCUSSION. THE SECRETARIAT (LITTMAN) IN INTRODUCING THE REPORT STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THE USE OF DIRECT PAYMENTS TO SMALL DAIRY FARMERS IN WESTERN EUROPE AS A MEANS TO REDUCE DAIRY SURPLUSES. HE SAID THAT SINCE THE DAIRY SURPLUS IS A SOCIO-POLITICAL PROBLEM, IT CANNOT BE SOLVED VIA THE PRICE MECHANISM. HE VIEWED LARGE DAIRY PRODUCERS AS THE BENEFACTORS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF THE HIGH PRICES OF MILK AND SUGGESTED THAT PRICES FOR LARGE PRODUCERS BE ALLOWED TO DROP TO BRING SUPPLY AND DEMAND MORE INTO EQUILIBRIUM. ALTHOUGH THE FLOOR WAS OPEN FOR DISCUSSION, NO COMMENTS WERE FORTHCOMING FROM THE EC COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVE OR ANY OF THE EC MEMBER COUNTRIES.

6. THE GRAINS REPORT WAS DISTRIBUTED ONLY AT THE SESSION, PRECLUDING THE OPPORTUNITY FOR REVIEW BY EXPERTS AT HOME. COMMENTS WERE MADE BY DELEGATES REGARDING THE COMPARABILITY OF REGIONAL DATA BETWEEN THE VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE NEED FOR MORE INFORMATION ON GRAIN CONSUMPTION AND STOCKS FOR EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES.

7. THE REPORT ON LIVESTOCK AND MEAT RECEIVED FEW COMMENTS BUT IT WAS SUGGESTED THAT SOME OF THE TABLES SHOULD BE FURTHER CLARIFIED AS TO COVERAGE AND THAT PERIODIC CALCULATION OF AVERAGE PRODUCTION/STOCK RATIOS WOULD BE OF INTEREST TO MEMBER COUNTRIES.

8. THE REPORT ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN AGRICULTURAL

TRADE IN EUROPE IS THE MOST ANALYTICAL OF THE COMMODITY AND TRADE REPORTS PRESENTED AT THE SESSION. COMPARISONS OF TRADE DEVELOPMENTS ARE MADE DIRECTLY BETWEEN WESTERN EUROPE (WE) AND EASTERN EUROPE (EE); DETAILED TRADE DATA ARE PRESENTED ON HUNGARY, AND A DISCUSSION OF TRADE BALANCES AND FOOD CROP POLICIES IS GIVEN FOR SELECTED COUNTRIES. ALTHOUGH THE ROMANIAN DELEGATION WAS CRITICAL OF THE DIRECT COMPARISONS BETWEEN WE AND EE, THE POLISH DELEGATION PRAISED THE REPORT FOR ITS ANALYTICAL CONTENT (PERHAPS AN OPEN EXPRESSION OF RESENTMENT OVER RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN POLAND, PARTICULARLY FOOD SHORTAGES) AND CALLED FOR AN INVOLVEMENT BY THIS COMMITTEE IN ALL

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NSAE-00 SP-02 STR-07 TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01
AGRE-00 L-03 OIC-02 /114 W
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ASPECTS OF TRADE, INCLUDING TRADE LIBERALIZATION. THE REPORT ALSO POINTS OUT THAT MANY COUNTRIES, FACING SERIOUS PROBLEMS OF INFLATION, ECONOMIC RECESSION, UNEMPLOYMENT, AND TRADE DEFICITS, ARE SCRUTINIZING DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AGRICULTURAL TRADE SECTOR. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE IN THOSE COUNTRIES WHERE AGRICULTURAL TRADE IS A MAJOR COMPONENT OF TOTAL IMPORTS OR EXPORTS.

9. HIGHLIGHTING THE PROGRAM OF WORK IN THE UPCOMING YEAR WILL BE THE STUDY ON LONG-TERM MARKET DEVELOPMENTS. THE COMMITTEE WILL DEVOTE ONE FULL DAY AT ITS THIRTIETH SESSION TO A DETAILED DISCUSSION OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND DEVELOPMENTS FOR FEEDING STUFFS, MILK AND MEAT IN EUROPE UNTIL 1985.

10. THE COMMITTEE DECIDED TO HOLD ITS THIRTIETH SESSION
FROM MARCH 5-9, 1979. VANDEN HEUVEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TRADE, COMMITTEES, MEETING REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978GENEVA04021
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780115-0620
Format: TEL
From: GENEVA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780367/aaaacelx.tel
Line Count: 171
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: ce59cec6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3327772
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (ECE) COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURAL PROBLEMS, TWENTY-NINTH SESSION, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND
TAGS: ETRD, ECE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/ce59cec6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014